The Need for Agile Program Documentation

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The past decade has brought much change for warfighters, necessitating new materiel solutions to ensure our soldiers have what they need to accomplish the mission. Over the course of the last 10 years, doctrine, strategy, operations, tactics, techniques, procedures, as well as the threat and battlefield environments have changed significantly.

From the initial invasion, to the withdrawal from Iraq, to the transfer of mission to Afghanistan, requirements for soldier's equipment, vehicles, surveillance, and weapons systems have challenged materiel developers to keep pace with the speed of war. A known program that demonstrated the government's remarkable ability to streamline the process to develop, evaluate, and field within 2 years is the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle. When an urgent requirement necessitated a rapid response, all the stakeholders from the resourcers, developers, evaluators, and sustainers executed a more streamlined process to get capability to the field faster, albeit with some challenges.

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Table 1. Milestone B Documentation

OSD Statutory	OSD Regulatory	Army Regulatory
• Acquisition Program Baseline (APB) • Analysis of Alternatives (AoA) • Benefit Analysis and Determination • Business Case Analysis (for 2366b) • Clinger-Cohen Act (CCA) Compliance • Competition Analysis • Consideration of Technology Issues • Cooperative Opportunities • Core Logistics Analysis/Source of Repair • Data Management Strategy • Determination of Contract Type • Independent Cost Estimate (ICE) • Industrial Base Capabilities Considerations • Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) Quantities • Manpower Estimate • Market Research • MDA Program Certification • Post Implementation Review • PESHE • Replaced System Sustainment Plan • Selected Acquisition Report (SAR) • Submission of DD Form 1492 & Cert. of Spectrum Support	• Acquisition Decision Memorandum (ADM) • Acquisition IA Strategy • Acquisition Strategy • Affordability Assessment • Capability Development Document (CDD) • CIO Confirmation of CCA Compliance • Corrosion Prevention Control Plan • CARD • DoD Component Cost Estimate • Exit Criteria • Information Support Plan (ISP) • Initial Capabilities Document (ICD) • Item Unique Identification (IUID) Plan • Life Cycle Signature Support Plan • Life Cycle Support Plan (LCSP) • MDA Assess of compliance w/CBRN Rqmt • Net-Centric Data Strategy • OTA Report of OT&E Results • Preliminary Design Review (PDR) Report • PPP for Programs with CPI • Spectrum Supportability Determination • Staffing Plan • System Security Management Plan • System Threat Assessment Report (STAR) • Systems Engineering Plan (SEP) • Technology Readiness Assessment • Test and Evaluation Master Plan (TEMP)	• Acquisition Plan • Applied Embedded Diagnostic Assessment Memo • Army Cost Position (ACP) • Basis of Issue Plan (BOIP)/Qualitative and Quantitative Personnel Reqmts. Info (QQPRI) • Business Case Analysis • CPI Identification Memo • Environmental Quality Life-Cycle Cost Estimate • Interoperability Certification—Intra Army • MANPRINT Assessment/MER • Materiel Fielding Plan draft • MIPS • New Equipment Training Plan (NETP) • Performance-Based Agreement • Safety Release (if req'd) • Safety Confirmation • Simulation Support Plan (SSP) • System Safety Management Plan • System Training Plan (STRAP) • Transportability Report/Transportability Assessment • Program Office Estimate

Is it possible to place this concept across the Army and Department of Defense (DoD)?

The Challenge

In most programs, the lack of an urgent requirement dictates the standard acquisition process with its historical use of lengthy and costly program resources. In 2010, Secretary of the Army John McHugh stated in an Acquisition Review that, "We need an agile system that rapidly develops, purchases, and fields innovative solutions for our soldiers." Recently, senior defense leaders have directed program managers to pursue avenues that are smarter and more efficient and to pursue optimal program structures to deliver capability that aren't just cookie cutter program plans. However, the modernization of the current documentation requirements has not kept pace with this optimal guidance and does not readily support non-traditional approaches. There is a critical need for the defense acquisition community to create a more agile documentation process to support and permit the documented approval of programs that will rapidly and timely provide the warfighter with the capability to defeat current and potential adversaries in future contingencies.

The Current Documentation Process

The common denominator for coordinating a program across the required DoD offices and agencies is documentation.

Yet, the traditional documentation requirements are a common factor of extended program schedule. There are approximately 70 statutory and regulatory documents required to successfully negotiate a major program milestone. Each document necessitates considerable man-hours to write, coordinate within the program office, and staff across dozens of higher echelon offices; the program executive officer, Army, and DoD. Additionally, rework and rewriting due to frequent changes to templates or documentation increase the already significant resources spent from start to final approval.

Significant resources are spent developing, coordinating, and staffing the program support documentation for a Materiel Development Decision, Milestones A, B, C, and the Full Rate Production decision. This environment limits the acquisition process responsiveness. By the time a weapon system is fielded (as long as 7 years per the DoDI 5000 series), the doctrine, strategy, and theater may have changed and the tactics, techniques, and procedures may even require a new materiel solution. We need to review the required documentation to reflect the improvement we are witnessing in rapidly developing and fielding program capabilities.

Streamline Required Documentation

Streamlining the documentation process can be accomplished simply by more extensively tailoring required

documentation to the program, eliminating nonvalue-added documentation, and postponing the submission of low-risk documents until after fielding. Maybe there is even a quick-look review for some documentation requirements to be followed by a more extensive review and submission for specific low-risk cases. These cases could be identified by higher technology readiness levels, established production capability, or commonality of system reuse due to an incremental upgrade. The goal is to deliver a safe and reliable product to the warfighter as quickly as possible and in some cases follow up with the required documentation where technology maturity allows.

review and approval. Workforce members need to be empowered to get rid of the status quo and, more important, allow nontraditional approaches. There are numerous lean methods to revamp the documentation process and only require documents where there is value added in delivering capability effectively and efficiently to the warfighter: value stream mapping, cutting redundancies and process delays, and minimizing unnecessary reviews through internal and external agencies.

Another method is to delegate authority for approving documentation to the lowest level possible and ensure

> **When an urgent requirement necessitated a rapid response, all the stakeholders from the resourcers, developers, evaluators, and sustainers executed a more streamlined process to get capability to the field faster, albeit with some challenges.**

Let Program Purpose Drive Documentation

The primary purpose of a tactical commander's intent is to provide the framework for subordinate actions. Why does the documentation not follow the same concept? The more the program manager's freedom of movement is limited, the fewer are the means and methods available to pursue an optimal program structure. Rather than document proponents reviewing document responses to ensure they satisfy "go/no-go lists," a better process might entail reviewing responses to ensure they meet the document's intent at an acceptable risk level. In some cases, this could save substantial time by focusing on what is truly needed to assess the risk while minimizing nonvalue-added time and effort. If a document's content meets the intent with little risk, it is sufficient. How can we emplace a program that requires only the necessary documents, assesses program risk, and is approved once the intent of the document is met?

Revise to Reduce Review and Approval Steps

The key to affecting a documentation paradigm shift is a collective enterprise response to changing the way we do business. The defense acquisition community is receiving well strategized and insightful guidance from our senior defense leaders. The challenge is the implementation of a process that supports that guidance. This change will not be easy, especially for organizations that have a substantial number of personnel assigned the task of documentation

accountability while enforcing a new process, incentivizing creativity, and rewarding efficiency.

A concerted effort is necessary to align our warfighters' needs to defeat current and potential adversaries in future contingencies with our obligations to the taxpayer. To effect a significant paradigm shift, leadership at each level must support process change.

One good candidate is the reduction of the number of required supporting documents and the process used to staff and approve them. Navigating the existing documentation process in pursuit of the optimal structure will continue to be difficult unless the "document checklist mentality process/method" is changed to a more purpose-driven process that focuses only on what is necessary to deliver capability to the field as efficiently as possible. Program managers should be granted authority to meet the "intent" of only publishing those documents that apply to their programs within an acceptable level of risk. The current acquisition system cannot accept this recommended "program-specific purpose driven documentation" paradigm without senior leadership support, and likewise the document owners embracing process change in how we coordinate documentation with the program stakeholders. ✍